

Remarks

Claims 1-74 were previously pending. By this amendment, claims 1-10, 13-14 and 20 are cancelled. Claims 11, 15-16 and 21 have been rewritten in independent form and claims 24 and 25 have been amended. After entry of this amendment, claims 11-12, 15-19, 21-74 are pending with claims 11, 15, 16, 21, 22, 44, 68, 70, 72 and 73 being independent claims. No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-10, 13, 14 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kugel (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,931). Without acceding to the propriety of the rejection, Applicants have canceled claims 1-10, 13, 14 and 20 to advance the prosecution of this application; therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn. Applicants reserve the right to present these cancelled and/or other claims in one or more divisional and/or continuation applications.

Allowable Subject Matter*Claims 22-74*

Claims 22-74 are allowed. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Applicants have amended claims 24 and 25 to change the word "includes" to "comprises". While the terms are considered synonymous and both open-ended phrases (see, e.g., MPEP § 2111.03), Applicants have amended the claims for consistency.

Claims 11-12, 15-19 and 21

The Examiner indicates that claims 11-12, 15-19, and 21 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have rewritten claims 11, 15, 16 and 21 in independent form such that they should now be in condition for allowance. Claims 12 and 17-19 depend respectively from claims 11 and 16 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

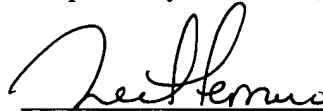
As suggested in the Office Action to avoid processing delays, Applicants will submit Comments on the Statement of Reasons for Allowance upon payment of the Issue Fee.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,



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